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CURRENT SOVIET CONDUCT

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Submitted by the

DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

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Concurred in by the

INTELLIGENCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

on 8 July 1958. Concurring were The Director of Intelligence and Research, Department of State; the Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, Department of the Army; the Director of Naval Intelligence; the Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, USAF; and the Deputy Director for Intelligence, The Joint Staff. The Atomic Energy Commission Representative to the IAC and the Assistant Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation, abstained, the subject being outside of their jurisdiction.

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IMPLICATIONS OF CURRENT SOVIET ~~HR~~ CONDUCT ⁹⁴⁻³

THE PROBLEM

To assess the implications of current Soviet conduct relative to Eastern Europe and the West.

CONCLUSIONS

1. We believe the basic motivation behind Moscow's current tough line to be its grave concern over its power position in Eastern Europe, where it considers "revisionism" to have developed to dangerous proportions.¹ This concern has led the USSR to attack Tito and to cause the execution of Nagy — measures intended, at least in part, to put pressure on Gomulka. We believe that the Soviets will exert greater efforts to obtain Gomulka's compliance with Bloc requirements or, failing that, perhaps even to replace him.
2. We believe that recent Soviet actions do not indicate that the USSR has abandoned its "peaceful coexistence" line. However, the

USSR probably estimates that its anti-revisionist moves, particularly the Nagy execution, have seriously reduced the chances for early East-West negotiations favorable to its interests. The Soviets will nonetheless continue to press for negotiations and to seek to place the onus on the West for delays.

3. It is possible, however, that the explanation of recent events lies deeper, and these events may reflect differences within the Soviet leadership and a degree of Communist Chinese influence. If this is so, it may portend a new and stiffer policy towards the West as well as the Satellites.

DISCUSSION

4. *The Campaign against Revisionism.* Since the November 1957 meetings in Moscow, the Bloc campaign against revisionism has been mounting. But its effectiveness was hampered so long as two logical steps remained untaken. First, until Tito was denounced and read out of the socialist world, it was impos-

sible to demonstrate convincingly that his positions were impermissible to a socialist state. Second, until Nagy had been executed, the attitude of complete intolerance toward his crimes was compromised. Both these steps were difficult to take, however, if only because of the negative effect they would have on the Soviet stance in foreign policy. Another restraining factor *possibly* was involved: a reluctance on the part of Khrushchev, both for personal and policy reasons, to admit the failure of his policy of rapprochement with Tito and of his less restrictive policy toward the Satellites.

¹ We employ the term "revisionism" to embrace deviations from current official Communist doctrine which appear to the Soviet leadership to threaten its power and control. Pressures for greater autonomy in the Eastern European Satellites and Titoism currently rank high among the sins of revisionism.

5. The logic of the anti-revisionist campaign would appear to call for yet a third step — the reduction of Poland to full subordination to the USSR. There is no evidence that Moscow has actually employed its economic and military weapons against Gomulka, although these factors cast a continuing shadow over Soviet-Polish relations. He is obviously placed under great pressure, however, by the actions taken against Tito and Nagy. Against this pressure, he retains many of the assets which helped him to power in October 1956: the threat of mass resistance by the Polish people under his leadership, and his ability to argue persuasively that only he can prevent popular violence and to warn that violence in Poland might spread to East Germany and risk embroilment with the Western powers. Over the last 20 months Gomulka has strengthened his position with the Polish military forces and probably counts on their support in any stand he takes with respect to the USSR. Moreover, he has moderated many of those aspects of the Polish internal scene which are offensive to the USSR, has helped the Soviet Union to build and maintain an image of respectability and tolerance before the uncommitted nations, and has, to a limited extent, even assisted the anti-revisionist campaign.

6. Against the above must be set the evidence, implicit in recent Soviet actions, of a greater Soviet determination to meet the dangers of revisionism. In addition, the USSR may believe that, with the West preoccupied with the Middle East, the risk of widened conflict arising from direct Soviet intervention in Poland would be lessened.

7. We infer from Gomulka's speech of 28 June that, while he realizes he must pull in his horns, he does not regard Soviet-Polish relations as having reached the stage of an ultimate and unavoidable showdown. He neither succumbed altogether to Soviet pressure nor called for popular support against it. Instead, he sharpened his criticism of Yugoslavia, but retained a tone of sorrow in contrast to the anger shown by all other Bloc statements. He condemned Nagy's behavior, but still pictured him as a weak leader giving

way to pressure rather than as an active and long-time conspirator. Most important, he did not endorse the execution, calling it Hungary's internal affair.

8. We do not believe that the USSR has taken a decision to subdue Poland at all costs, using whatever means prove necessary. But we cannot reaffirm that "the USSR's reluctant acceptance of the 'new' Poland . . . appears to be a long-range adjustment rather than a temporary accommodation."² In view of the intensity of the current Soviet campaign and Gomulka's continued foot-dragging, we believe that the USSR will make more direct efforts to obtain his compliance or, failing that, perhaps even to replace him.

9. *Implications for Soviet Foreign Policy.* We believe that recent events do not indicate that the USSR has ceased to desire a conference at the summit or lower level negotiations on matters in which the Soviet leaders have an interest. At the same time, the Soviet leaders may have concluded prior to undertaking their recent moves that, since the chances of an early summit conference on their terms were waning, they could more easily accept the political losses they would suffer in international affairs by pursuing a harder policy in Eastern Europe. In any event, they must recognize that adverse reactions in the West to their moves against revisionism may seriously reduce the short run chances that negotiations can be conducted on a basis favorable to Soviet interests. We believe that they are prepared to accept such a price, if necessary, in dealing with the situation in Eastern Europe, which they consider must always take precedence over non-Bloc affairs. They probably estimate that other powers will not agree to high level negotiations as long as the USSR continues to take strong measures in Eastern Europe. The Soviet note of 2 July and Soviet conduct at Geneva indicate that the USSR will nonetheless continue to press for negotiations and to seek to place the onus on the West for further delays.

² NIE 12-58, "Outlook for Stability in the Eastern European Satellites," 4 February 1958, paragraph 44.

10. *Other Possible Considerations.* While we think that the above most satisfactorily explains recent Soviet moves, other factors may also be involved. For example, we cannot be certain that Khrushchev's removal of opponents has put an end to the view within the Soviet leadership that his peaceful coexistence line is a dubious tactic which weakens the internal vitality of the Communist movement and that any but the smallest grants of autonomy to the satellites are impermissibly dangerous. Persons of this persuasion may feel that, in view of the recent gains in Bloc strength and weaknesses in the free world, victory is assured if only unity can be maintained. The failure of certain of Khrushchev's policies — courtship of Tito, partial relaxation of controls over Eastern Europe, effort to force the West into a summit conference on Soviet terms — may have encouraged a resurgence of this view within the Soviet leadership. If so, it would probably enjoy the support of the orthodox regimes in Eastern Europe as well as that of the Chinese Communists, who appear to be exerting an increased influence on Bloc policy and to prefer a generally tough line. We think that Khrushchev would take account of such views and, in order to prevent the formation of a serious opposition group, might take the lead in implementing them.

11. But the evidence concerning activities within the Soviet leadership is, as usual, elusive. On the one hand, the published results of the recent CPSU plenum reveal a further step in agricultural reforms associated with Khrushchev and the reinforcement, via the appointment of two new candidate members, of his position within the Presidium. We know of no hardening in domestic Soviet policy paralleling that in policy toward the Satellites. On the other hand, there have been reports of alleged policy differences within the Soviet leadership. Moreover, unresolved leadership differences may underlie several recent oscillations in Soviet foreign policy which have no other wholly satisfactory explanation. The Chinese role is obscure: Peiping has taken an even stronger line against revisionism than has the USSR, and we think that, if the So-

viet leadership were divided on this issue, the Chinese position might exert considerable weight.

12. If it is indeed the case that a new line is being pressed upon Khrushchev, then the future course of Soviet policy becomes even more uncertain. On its face, such a new line could involve a more extensive shift in tactics toward the non-Communist world than the mere raising of difficulties about the Geneva meeting, and a greater and more immediate threat to Gomulka's position than could be staved off by his recent speech. But any line of policy involving a partial retreat by Khrushchev would be quite unstable, in view of his almost certain subsequent attempts to reassert himself. Thus policy might undergo a series of zigs and zags flowing from the push and pull of an internal power struggle.

13. Alternatively, Khrushchev himself may have initiated the current line. He has to be especially concerned to distinguish sharply between his own innovations and those of others which he has labelled "revisionism." Thus he may have chosen to attack Tito, execute Nagy, and force concessions from Gomulka in order to establish himself as an anti-revisionist while demonstrating in other fields that only he is permitted to alter Communist doctrine. This view is all the more reasonable if Khrushchev has become personally disenchanted with Tito and impatient with Gomulka. If the initiative is indeed Khrushchev's own, the change in line might become as substantial as in the preceding paragraph but it would still be unstable, if only because of Khrushchev's willingness to change his mind.

14. We conclude that, at present, the most likely explanation of recent Soviet actions is not that the USSR has either abandoned its "peaceful coexistence" line or settled on Gomulka's downfall. Rather Moscow appears to be moving to insure its position in Eastern Europe, involving greater pressure upon Poland, and is prepared to take the consequences of a temporary setback in relations with the non-Communist world.

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